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Εὐφημεῖν Χρὴ, καζίσασθαι τοῖς ἡμετέροισι
Χοροῖσιν,
Ὅστις ἄπειρος τοιῶνδε λόγων, ἢ γνώμη καθαρεύει
Ἠγεννεάων ὄρρια Μεσῶν μήτ' ἴδε κω, μητ'
ἐχόρευσε .. Aristoph.

He whom the muse hath never call'd her own,
Nor taught her lore, nor purest thoughts inspired,
Be silent, nor the sacred choir approach.
ANON.

Youth, middle life, and old age, are all liable, at times, to be attacked with that torpor of mind, and shyness of feeling, which render its subjects, alike averse to the pursuits of business, and deaf

to the voice of instruction. In those hours of tediousness and languor, tired with more arduous duties, we fly to something which may divert us from the cares of mortality by the charms of amusement, and dismiss for a season, by pleasing variety, the slower occupations of life. Dreading the fatigues of study, and shunning the bustle of the world, we seek in calm and tranquil pleasure, a temporary cessation of misery, and a partial respite from toil.

At such times as these, Intellectual pursuits may well

be considered as the proper objects of concern;- amusements, which may relax, without enervating, and unbend, without dissipating the mind,— which may raise by excitement from the gloom of dejection, and lull to oblivion the sorrows of life.-

Poetry, inasmuch as it is light in its nature, may be accounted a pleasing solace of our leisure moments, and ed. by resource to fill up the vacuum of our idle hours. Let us trace its character, & examine its effects. It will be found, in the course of this enquiry, that it is not that

trivial thing which some have represented it to be;- that it is a study worthy of an intelligent being, notwithstanding the ridicule which ignorance, and the abuse which vulgarity, has thrown upon its name,- that it is a subject of pleasing contemplation, to the gentleman and the scholar, the philosopher and the sage.

In ancient days, the inapt minstrels awaked the fire of genius in wild & romantic strains. Their measures were irregular, and their

numbers unpolished, as the rocks that towered around them, & the mountains that sheltered their abodes.- Creation, majestic in her varied works, kindled their dreams into a flame of inspiration, and stampt upon their magic verses the image of herself. They borrowed from the luminance of nature, to recompense the deficiency of art, and supply the absence of refinement. And where so exhaustless a fountain, where so endless a resource? Accordingly, the same

of the poet, lies along rivers of continual flow, and vallies of eternal verdure.- Rapture animates his toils, and peace sweetens his repose.-

Civilization, and the progress of society, bring with them correspondent advancement in all things else. The ideas of man, as his nature loses some portion of its savage wildness, become more correct, more graceful, more connected, more defined;- the expression of them, more pleasing to the judicious reader, and more grateful to the polished ear.

In no other branch of writing, can this change be more manifestly perceived, than the poetic art. Crowded dwellings, and glittering spires, rise in those spots, where mighty mountains reared their proud summits to the skies. The deserts and peopled, the hills are levelled into plains, and the wilds are converted into cities. Manners have changed, modes of life are altered, - population has increased, - and poetry has shared in

the improvement, and advanced in its growth. Its numbers are harmonized, its measures softened, its irregularity restrained, and its wildness subdued.

At the present enlightened era of mankind, poetry may be said to be in a state of almost complete perfection. Elegiac bards, warm in soothing verses of tenderness and feeling;- the epic poet, swells his high notes, in proclaiming the victories of the field, and the exploits of

tical valor;- the lyric writer, a-
dorns in hymns of praise the
author of existence, and dedi-
cates his tributary strains to
human worth;- while in every
part of the wide extended
surface of the globe, the favor-
ed sons of inspiration, assert
their claims to honor, & their
titles to distinction, by advoca-
ting the cause of piety, and
directing to the rewards of vir-
tue.

The importance in which
our subject was held among
the men of former days, may
be easily seen, by the fact,

that it was employed as the channel, through which was conducted to posterity, a knowledge of the excellence of private character, and the firmness of public integrity. The atchievements of the warrior, and the discernment of the statesman, were proclaimed through this medium, when death had quenched the ardor of their genius, and terminated the progress of their exertions.

Of those, whose conceit is beyond instruction, and whose ignorance is hardened against reproof, would consider those

first impulses of nature, which art could not restrain, and bigotry could not control, perhaps they would lower pretensions which they cannot maintain, and close aspersions which they cannot support.. But, in our present degenerate age, where adventitious circumstances govern the judgment, and temporary prejudices darken the discernment, opinions contradicted, are with difficulty changed, because indifference will not seek for conviction, and vanity will not stoop to confession.—

These remarks will equally apply to those who have directed their censures against the readers, as to those who have ridiculed the writers of poetry. Both are laboring under an error, and both require admonition. The author whose ideas are arranged, & whose system is disposed, finds no difficulty in clothing in the apparel of words, the thoughts which his intellect has conceived. But the poet, must adapt his expressions to his sentiments, plaintive, when sorrow sighs, and sprightly, when gladness sings. Harsh epithets, ill-timed

sentences, and paltry allusions, will, by defacing the splendor of a part, diminish the dignity of the whole. Offences to the ear, and violations of the taste, will veil every gesture of remark, and conceal every beauty of observation.

Considering poetry as a source of comfort, satisfaction will easily be attained. In the private seclusion of domestic life, we shall reap a harvest of profit and delight, cultivating from our acquaintance with the charms of its varied beauties. It will refine our understandings, elevate our minds, & improve our hearts.

the fictions of one, and the fancies of another, may not be hurtful to the judicious reader, and will lead him in paths bedecked with roses of pleasure, and adorned with amaranths of delight.

It has often been advanced as an argument to prove the contempt in which poetry is universally held, that the brightest writers of the art, have lived and died, in the gloom of degraded poverty, and the pains of hopeless want. But we must mingle reason with feeling, and temper pity with

discretion.- The miseries of those, as well as other authors, has been principally owing to themselves;- to their ignorance of life, their careless habits, and their immoral lives. Milton could not obtain a due recompense for the labors of his pen;- but he lived in an age, when literature was not eagerly patronized, for it had not been much cultivated;- when Poetry was too delicate to be relished, & too refined to be understood.-

For the present age, we have not the same

excuse, because the charge of our opponents will not be justified by fact.- The productions of those, truly gifted with the hallowed fire of Poetic inspiration, are circulated with speed, and perused with avidity,- treasured in the memories of the wise, retained in the approbation of the great..

Q.